

Giving Thanks To God

by Robert F. Turner

In Romans 1, Paul describes sin in its most basic sense as a rejection of God. Man's just responsibility is shown in that he could "know God" as "eternal power and deity" from evidences in the world about him. But man's vanity, his ego, prevents his acceptance of God; and this is demonstrated by two things: 1) his refusal to glorify God — to praise, or look up to God; and 2) man's ingratitude. "They glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful" (v. 21).

Being thankful, so much like genuine worship or praise, demands a humble and contrite heart. It indicates our feeling of **need** for God; of **dependence** upon Him. It makes us ever aware that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Sermons on thanksgiving tend to stress the expression of gratitude that is due, following the reception of blessings. This is, of course, in order, as Jesus taught when He had healed the ten lepers (Lk. 17:12-19). "Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" We are daily blessed, and should daily express our thanks.

But gratitude goes much further than a courteous "Thank You!" or even the most sincere and complete expression of thanksgiving. It is an attitude, basic to the life of a Christian. Paul wrote to the Colossians, "As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and builded up in Him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (2:6-7). Various manuscripts relate this "thanksgiving" to their faith (KJV, "abounding therein with th. .") while Lenski says, "it is closely united with the confirmation that is constantly received."

1 Thessalonians 5:18 reads, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." A deep-seated, constant feeling of gratitude toward God, seems to sum up the awareness, dependence, and confidence which characterizes a true follower of God in Christ; and without which we cannot please Him. It is indicative of faith, and hope, and love. It produces "the sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15); both in word and in a life devoted to Him (Col. 3:17).

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